Amendments to the Claims.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (canceled)

Claim 2. (previously presented) An apparatus for providing an automated system of record for at least one negotiation, comprising:

a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the

automated negotiations engine indicating any changes in the terms until a set of terms

is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity;

a contract authority for assigning a unique identifier to such a negotiation;

a security function for validating that the terms stored by the automated

negotiations engine for such a negotiation identified by the unique identifier have

appropriate access controls and privilege safeguards.

Claim 3. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the contract

authority further comprises a dynamic contract manager which incorporates security

extensions into terms proposed by each user.

Claim 4. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 3, wherein the security

extensions further comprise access control lists.

Claim 5. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 3, wherein the security

extensions further comprise privilege lists.

Claim 6. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the security

function further comprises validation functions to respond to requests for information

associated with the unique identifier.

Claim 7. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the contract

authority further comprises a number generator which generates identifiers in such a

way that it insures that the identifier will not be generated again within the system of

record.

Claim 8. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the security function further comprises audit functions for insuring that a record of each attempted access to the automated system of record is stored in the automated system of record.

Claim 9. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the contract authority enables a user to associate external data with terms stored in the automated system of record, thereby becoming a part of the automated system of record.

Claim 10. (previously presented) A method for providing an automated system of record for at least one negotiation, comprising the steps of :

operating a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as

negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated

negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the

storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which

proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the

indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating any changes in the

terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity;

assigning a unique identifier, through a contact authority, to such a negotiation;

validating, through a security function, that the terms stored by the automated

negotiations engine for such a negotiation identified by the unique identifier have

appropriate access controls and privilege safeguards.

Claim 11. (previously presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of

validating further comprises the step of incorporating security extensions into terms

proposed by each user.

Claim 12. (previously presented) The method of Claim 11, wherein the step of

incorporating security extensions further comprises the step of including access

control lists.

Claim 13. (previously presented) The method of Claim 11, wherein the step of

incorporating security extensions further comprises the step of including privilege

lists.

Claim 14. (previously presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of validating further comprises the step of using validation functions to respond to requests for information associated with the unique identifier.

Claim 15. (previously presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of assigning unique identifiers further comprises the step of using a number generator which generates identifiers in such a way that it insures that the identifier will not be generated again within the system of record.

Claim 16. (previously presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of validating further comprises the step of insuring that a record of each   attempted access to the automated system of record is stored in the automated system of record.

Claim 17. (previously presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of using a contract authority further comprises the step of enabling a user to associate external data with terms stored in the automated system of record, thereby becoming a part of the automated system of record.

Claim 18. (currently amended) An apparatus for providing an automated system of record for at least one negotiation so that the automated system of record can be stored in multiple repositories, comprising:

a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the

terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user

supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive

to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate

negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and

receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate

negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an

initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations

system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along

a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system,

during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at

the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one

of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further

recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each

terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being

sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the

automated negotiations engine indicating any changes in the terms until a set of terms

is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity;

a ~~contract~~ <u>sponsor</u> authority for assigning a unique identifier to such a

negotiation; and

a multiple repository manager for propagating data into multiple repositories

using the unique identifier and for managing any updates which may apply to the

multiple repositories.

Claim 19. (currently amended) The apparatus of Claim 18, wherein the multiple repository manager further comprises a ~~contract~~ central switch for transmitting information to multiple repositories appropriately.

Claim 20. (currently amended) The apparatus of Claim 18, wherein the multiple repository manager further comprises a ~~contract~~ router for communicating with the ~~contract~~ central switch.

Claim 21. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 18, wherein the multiple repository manager further comprises customizing functions which can respond to a user request to maintain a copy of items from a negotiation that are relevant to that user in a local repository.

Claim 22. (currently amended) A method for providing an automated system of record for at least one negotiation so that the automated system of record can be stored in multiple repositories, comprising the steps of:

   operating a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the

multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being

responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the

multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending

and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate

negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine

recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as

negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated

negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the

storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which

proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the

indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating any changes in the

terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity;

assigning, through a ~~contract~~ sponsor authority, a unique identifier to such a

negotiation; and

propagating data, through a multiple repository manager, into multiple

repositories using the unique identifier and managing any updates which may apply to

the multiple repositories.

Claim 23. (currently amended) The method of Claim 22, wherein the step of

propagating data further comprises the step of transmitting information to multiple

repositories appropriately using a ~~contract~~ central switch.

Claim 24. (currently amended) The method of Claim 22, wherein the step of

propagating data further comprises the step of communicating with the ~~contract~~

central switch using a ~~contract~~ router.

Claim 25. (previously presented) The method of Claim 22, wherein the step of propagating data further comprises the step of responding to a user request to maintain a copy of items from a negotiation that are relevant to that user in a local repository.

Claim 26. (previously presented) An apparatus for providing an automated system of record for automatically processing at least one negotiation between first and second users who are communicating over a network to each other negotiation terms that include a plurality of variables, comprising:

a contract authority for assigning a unique identifier to such a negotiation;

a security program for validating that the terms stored for such a negotiation identified by the unique identifier have appropriate access controls and privilege safeguards; and

negotiations software configured to process such a negotiation by:

 responding to and recognizing the first and second users as negotiators,

 designating one of the users as a deciding entity;

 receiving a negotiation term from one of the users;

 analyzing the negotiation term to understand its purpose;

 formatting the negotiation term according to the understood purpose;

 placing the formatted negotiation term into a context supplied by at least one of the users;

 indicating a detected change in a negotiation term to at least one of the users;

 sending the negotiation term to one of the users;

 storing the negotiation term; and

repeating the above processing until a signal is received from the deciding entity to stop negotiations.

Claim 27. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein the contract authority further comprises a dynamic contract manager which incorporates security extensions into terms proposed by each user.

Claim 28. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 27, wherein the security extensions further comprise access control lists.

Claim 29. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 27, wherein the security extensions further comprise privilege lists.

Claim 30. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein the security program further comprises validation programs to respond to requests for information associated with the unique identifier.

Claim 31. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein the contract authority further comprises a number generator which generates identifiers in such a way that it insures that the identifier will not be generated again within the system of record.

Claim 32. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein the security program further comprises audit programs for insuring that a record of each

attempted access to the automated system of record is stored in the automated system of record.

Claim 33. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein the contract authority enables a user to associate external data with terms stored in the automated system of record, thereby becoming a part of the automated system of record.

Claim 34. (previously presented) A method for providing an automated system of record for automatically processing at least one negotiation between first and second users who are communicating over a network to each other negotiation terms that include a plurality of variables, comprising the steps of:

      assigning a unique identifier, through a contact authority, to such a negotiation;

      validating, through a security program, that the terms stored for such a negotiation identified by the unique identifier have appropriate access controls and privilege safeguards;

      responding to and recognizing the first and second users as negotiators;

      designating one of the users as a deciding entity;

      receiving a negotiation term from one of the users;

      analyzing the negotiation term to understand its purpose;

      formatting the negotiation term according to the understood purpose;

placing the formatted negotiation term into a context supplied by at least one of the users;

indicating a detected change in a negotiation term to at least one of the users;

sending the negotiation term to one of the users;

storing the negotiation term; and

repeating the above steps until a signal is received from the deciding entity to stop negotiations.

Claim 35. (previously presented) The method of Claim 34, wherein the step of validating further comprises the step of incorporating security extensions into terms proposed by each user.

Claim 36. (previously presented) The method of Claim 35, wherein the step of incorporating security extensions further comprises the step of including access control lists.

Claim 37. (previously presented) The method of Claim 35, wherein the step of incorporating security extensions further comprises the step of including privilege lists.

Claim 38. (previously presented) The method of Claim 34, wherein the step of validating further comprises the step of using validation programs to respond to requests for information associated with the unique identifier.

Claim 39. (previously presented) The method of Claim 34, wherein the step of assigning unique identifiers further comprises the step of using a number generator which generates identifiers in such a way that it insures that the identifier will not be generated again within the system of record.

Claim 40. (previously presented) The method of Claim 34, wherein the step of validating further comprises the step of insuring that a record of each   attempted access to the automated system of record is stored in the automated system of record.

Claim 41. (previously presented) The method of Claim 34, wherein the step of using a contract authority further comprises the step of enabling a user to associate external data with terms stored in the automated system of record, thereby becoming a part of the automated system of record.

Claim 42. (previously presented) An apparatus for storing in multiple repositories an automated system of record for automatically processing at least one negotiation between first and second users who are communicating over a network to each other negotiation terms that include a plurality of variables, comprising:

a contract authority for assigning a unique identifier to such a negotiation;

a multiple repository manager for propagating data into multiple repositories using the unique identifier and for managing any updates which may apply to the multiple repositories; and

negotiations software configured to process such a negotiation by:

responding to and recognizing the first and second users as negotiators,

designating one of the users as a deciding entity;

receiving a negotiation term from one of the users;

analyzing the negotiation term to understand its purpose;

formatting the negotiation term according to the understood purpose;

placing the formatted negotiation term into a context supplied by at least one of the users;

indicating a detected change in a negotiation term to at least one of the users;

sending the negotiation term to one of the users;

storing the negotiation term; and

repeating the above processing until a signal is received from the deciding entity to stop negotiations.

Claim 43. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 42, wherein the multiple repository manager further comprises a contract central switch for transmitting information to multiple repositories appropriately.

Claim 44. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 42, wherein the multiple repository manager further comprises a contract router for communicating with the contract central switch.

Claim 45. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 42, wherein the multiple repository manager further comprises customizing features which can respond to a user request to maintain a copy of items from a negotiation that are relevant to that user in a local repository.

Claim 46. (previously presented) A method for storing in multiple repositories an automated system of record for automatically processing at least one negotiation between first and second users who are communicating over a network to each other negotiation terms that include a plurality of variables, comprising the steps of:

assigning, through a contract authority, a unique identifier to such a negotiation;

propagating data, through a multiple repository manager, into multiple repositories using the unique identifier and managing any updates which may apply to the multiple repositories;

responding to and recognizing the first and second users as negotiators,

designating one of the users as a deciding entity;

receiving a negotiation term from one of the users;

analyzing the negotiation term to understand its purpose;

formatting the negotiation term according to the understood purpose;

placing the formatted negotiation term into a context supplied by at least one of

the users;

indicating a detected change in a negotiation term to at least one of the users;

sending the negotiation term to one of the users;

storing the negotiation term; and

repeating the above until a signal is received from the deciding entity to stop

negotiations.

Claim 47. (previously presented) The method of Claim 46, wherein the step of

propagating data further comprises the step of transmitting information to multiple

repositories appropriately using a contract central switch.

Claim 48. (previously presented) The method of Claim 46, wherein the step of

propagating data further comprises the step of communicating with the contract

central switch using a contract router.

Claim 49. (previously presented) The method of Claim 46, wherein the step of

propagating data further comprises the step of responding to a user request to maintain

a copy of items from a negotiation that are relevant to that user in a local repository.

Claim 50. (previously presented) An apparatus for automatically processing at least one negotiation between first and second users who are communicating over a network to each other negotiation terms that include a plurality of variables, comprising:

negotiations software configured to process the negotiation by:

responding to and recognizing the first and second users as negotiators,

designating one of the users as a deciding entity;

receiving a negotiation term from one of the users;

analyzing the negotiation term to understand its purpose;

formatting the negotiation term according to the understood purpose;

placing the formatted negotiation term into a context supplied by at least one of the users;

indicating a detected change in a negotiation term to at least one of the users;

sending the negotiation term to one of the users;

storing the negotiation term; and

repeating the above processing until a signal is received from the deciding entity to stop negotiations.

Claim 51. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software enables iterative bargaining about the terms proposed by the users.

Claim 52. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software includes international processing software which enables proposed terms to be selected from and processed in internationally accepted formats.

Claim 53. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software includes sponsorship software which enables the creation of a sponsored community with prescribed rules and procedures for users.

Claim 54. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein negotiations software includes remote website authoring software which enables a user to create a website remotely, using predefined templates.

Claim 55. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software includes sample quantity ordering software which allows a user to order and purchase a sample quantity for evaluation.

Claim 56. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software includes archival software for recording and retrieving each set of proposed terms to minimize the risk that final terms can be repudiated later.

Claim 57. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software includes integrated database software to store and retrieve terms proposed.

Claim 58. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software includes commercial transaction software for enabling commercial transactions over a network.

Claim 59. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software includes non commercial transaction software for enabling non-commercial negotiations over a network.

Claim 60. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software is physically located at a central site on a network.

Claim 61. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software is physically located at a sponsor site on a network.

Claim 62. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software is physically located at a user's site on a network.

Claim 63. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the network comprises an open public network.

Claim 64. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the network comprises a private network.

Claim 65. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the network comprises a virtual private network.

Claim 66. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the network comprises a local area network internal to an entity.

Claim 67. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the negotiations software can be used by a web browser.

Claim 68. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein a user may include multimedia equipment capable of capturing additional content for inclusion in the terms.

Claim 69. (previously presented) A method for automatically processing negotiations between first and second users who communicate to each other negotiation terms that include a plurality of variables, the method comprising the following steps:

 establishing a communications path over a network;

 responding to and recognizing the first and second users as negotiators;

 designating one of the users as a deciding entity;

 receiving a negotiation term from one of the users;

 analyzing the negotiation term to understand its purpose;

 formatting the negotiation term according to the understood purpose;

 placing the formatted term into a context supplied by at least one of the users;

 indicating a detected change in a negotiation term to at least one of the users;

sending the negotiation term to one of the users;

storing the negotiation term; and

repeating the above steps until a signal is received from the deciding entity to stop

negotiations.

Claim 70. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of

responding further comprises the step of enabling iterative bargaining about the terms

proposed by the users.

Claim 71. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of analyzing

further comprises the step of international processing to enable proposed terms to be

selected from and processed in internationally accepted formats.

Claim 72. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of

establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of

enabling the creation of a sponsored community with prescribed rules and procedures

for users.

Claim 73. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of

establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of

enabling a user to create a website remotely, using predefined templates.

Claim 74. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of allowing a user to order and purchase a sample quantity for evaluation.

Claim 75. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of enabling the recording and retrieval of each set of proposed terms from each user to minimize the risk that final terms can be repudiated later.

Claim 76. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of including integrated database software to store and retrieve terms proposed.

Claim 77. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of analyzing further comprises the step of enabling commercial transactions over a network.

Claim 78. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of analyzing further comprises the step of enabling non-commercial negotiations over a network.

Claim 79. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of physically locating negotiations at a central site on a network.

Claim 80. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of physically locating negotiations at a sponsor site on a network.

Claim 81. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of physically locating negotiations at a user's site on a network.

Claim 82. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of using an open, public network.

Claim 83. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of using a private network.

Claim 84. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of using a virtual private network.

Claim 85. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of establishing a communications path over a network further comprises the step of using a local area network internal to an entity.

Claim 86. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of responding further comprises the step of enabling the use of a web browser.

Claim 87. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the step of · establishing a communications path further comprises the step of including multimedia equipment capable of capturing additional content for inclusion in the terms.

Claim 88. (previously presented) An apparatus for providing electronic non-repudiation for automatically processing at least one negotiation between first and second users who are communicating to each other over a secure communications path on a network negotiation terms that include a plurality of variables, comprising:

 control software for providing controlled access to a secure storage space;

 archiving software for storing terms in the secure storage space;

 negotiations software communicating over the network and configured to process the negotiation by:

  responding to and recognizing the first and second users as negotiators,

  designating one of the users as a deciding entity;

  receiving a negotiation term from one of the users over the secure communications path;

  decrypting the negotiation term;

analyzing the negotiation term to understand its purpose;

formatting the negotiation term according to the understood purpose;

placing the formatted negotiation term into a context supplied by at least

one of the users;

indicating a detected change in a negotiation term to at least one of the users;

encrypting the negotiation term;

sending the negotiation term over the secure communications path to one of the

users;

archiving the negotiation term in the secure storage space; and

repeating the above processing until a signal is received from the deciding entity to stop

negotiations.

Claim 89. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 88, wherein the control

software further comprises software for validating the identity of a user.

Claim 90. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 88, wherein the control

software further comprises firewall security.

Claim 91. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 88, wherein the encrypting

and decrypting of negotiation terms further comprises secure socket software.

Claim 92. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 88, wherein the encrypting and

decrypting of negotiation terms further comprises public key encryption software.

Claim 93. (previously presented) A method for providing electronic non-repudiation for automatically processing at least one negotiation between first and second users who are communicating to each other negotiation terms that include a plurality of variables, comprising the steps of:

      establishing a secure communications path over a network;

      responding to and recognizing the first and second users as negotiators,

      designating one of the users as a deciding entity;

      receiving a negotiation term from one of the users over the secure communications path;

      decrypting the negotiation term;

      analyzing the negotiation term to understand its purpose;

      formatting the negotiation term according to the understood purpose;

      placing the formatted negotiation term into a context supplied by at least one of the users;

      indicating a detected change in a negotiation term to at least one of the users;

      encrypting the negotiation term;

      sending the negotiation term over the secure communications path to one of the users;

      archiving the negotiation term; and

repeating the above processing until a signal is received from the deciding entity to stop negotiations.

Claim 94. (previously presented) The method of claim 93 wherein the step of providing controlled access to a secure storage space further comprises the step of validating the identity of a user.

Claim 95. (previously presented) The method of claim 93 wherein the step of providing controlled access to a secure storage space further comprises the step of using firewall security.

Claim 96. (previously presented) The method of claim 93 wherein the steps of encrypting and decrypting negotiation terms further comprises the step of using secure socket software.

Claim 97. (previously presented) The method of claim 93 wherein the steps of encrypting and decrypting negotiation terms further comprises the step of using public key encryption software.

Claim 98. (previously presented) A machine readable medium for storing a system for automatically processing at least one negotiation between first and second users who are communicating over a network to each other negotiation terms that include a plurality of variables, comprising:

negotiations software configured to process the negotiation by:

responding to and recognizing the first and second users as negotiators,

designating one of the users as a deciding entity;

receiving a negotiation term from one of the users;

analyzing the negotiation term to understand its purpose;

formatting the negotiation term according to the understood purpose;

placing the formatted negotiation term into a context supplied by at least

one of the users;

indicating a detected change in a negotiation term to at least one of the

users;

sending the negotiation term to one of the users;

storing the negotiation term; and

repeating the above processing until a signal is received from the deciding entity to stop

negotiations.

Claim 99. (new) An apparatus for providing an automated system of record for

processing multivariate negotiations , comprising:

a multivariate negotiations system including storage space, and negotiations software,

such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing

terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms,

formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied

context for use by a user, the multivariate negotiations system being responsive to

a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations

system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms

along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms by storing changed terms in the storage space until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity.

Claim 100. (new) The apparatus of Claim 99, wherein the storage space further comprises a database capable of being configured as specified by user-supplied context.

Claim 101. (new) The apparatus of Claim 100, wherein the user-supplied context further comprises access and configuration data supplied through remote web authoring functions and sponsored community rules for communities, workgroups, and participants.

Claim 102. (new) The apparatus of Claim 101, wherein the access and configuration data further comprise media and formatting choices.

Claim 103. ((new) The apparatus of Claim 102, wherein the media choices further comprise visual, print, audio, and audiovisual media.

Claim 104. (new) The apparatus of Claim 103, wherein the formatting choices further comprise a plurality of display options.

Claim 105. (new) The apparatus of Claim 104, wherein the display options further comprise the option of showing multiple sets of terms on a display page.

Claim 106. (new) The apparatus of Claim 104, wherein the display options further comprise the option of showing multiple sets of terms on multiple display pages.

Claim 107. (new) The apparatus of Claim 104, wherein the display options further comprise the option of showing non-annotated stored terms to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 108. (new) The apparatus of Claim 104, wherein the display options further comprise the option of using annotation to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 109. (new) The apparatus of Claim 108, wherein annotation further comprises using highlighting to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 110. (new) The apparatus of Claim 108, wherein annotation further comprises using underlining to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 111. (new) The apparatus of Claim 108, wherein annotation further comprises using symbols to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 112. (new) The apparatus of Claim 103, wherein the audio media choices further comprise text to speech options to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 113. (new) The apparatus of Claim 102, wherein the formatting choices further comprise configuring the database to show changes for only a specified subset of terms.

Claim 114. (new) The apparatus of Claim 102, wherein the formatting choices further comprise configuring the database to direct attention to changes automatically as negotiations progress.

Claim 115. (new) The apparatus of Claim 102, wherein the formatting choices further comprise configuring the database to direct attention to changes only as requested manually by a user.

Claim 116. (new) The apparatus of Claim 102, wherein the formatting choices further comprise configuring the database to direct attention to changes by linking a uniform resource locator to at least one subset of the changed terms.

Claim 117. (new) The apparatus of Claim 102, wherein the formatting choices further comprise configuring the database to direct attention to changes by transmitting a notification to the user, the notification referring to the changed terms.

Claim 118. (new) The apparatus of Claim 102, wherein the formatting choices further comprise configuring the database to direct attention to changes by sending an electronic mail message including the changed terms.

Claim 119. (new) The apparatus of Claim 102, wherein the formatting choices further comprise configuring the database to direct attention to changes by sending an electronic mail message referring to the changed terms.

Claim 120. (new) A method for providing an automated system of record for at least one negotiation, comprising the steps of :

operating a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the

multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being

responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the

multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending

and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate

negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine

recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as

negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated

negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the

storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which

proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the

indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms

by storing the changed terms in the storage space until a set of terms is acted upon in a

final manner by the deciding entity.

Claim 121. (new) The method of Claim 120, wherein the step of storing changed terms

in the storage space further comprises the step of storing the changed terms in a

database capable of being configured as specified by user-supplied context.

Claim 122. (new) The method of Claim 121, wherein the step of using user-supplied

context further comprises the step of using access and configuration data supplied

through remote web authoring functions and sponsored community rules for

communities, workgroups, and participants.

Claim 123. (new) The method of Claim 122, wherein the step of using access and configuration data further comprises the step of using media and formatting choices.

Claim 124. (new) The method of Claim 123, wherein the step of using media choices further comprises the step of using visual, print, audio, and audiovisual media choices.

Claim 125. (new) The method of Claim 124, wherein the step of using formatting choices further comprises the step of using a plurality of display options.

Claim 126. (new) The method of Claim 125, wherein the step of using display options further comprises the step of showing multiple sets of terms on a display page.

Claim 127. (new) The method of Claim 125, wherein the step of using display options further comprises the step of showing multiple sets of terms on multiple display pages.

Claim 128. (new) The method of Claim 125, wherein the step of using display options further comprises the step of showing non-annotated stored terms to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 129. (new) The method of Claim 125, wherein the step of using display options further comprises the step of using annotation to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 130. (new) The method of Claim 129, wherein the step of using annotation further comprises the step of using highlighting to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 131. (new) The method of Claim 129, wherein the step of using annotation further comprises the step of using underlining to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 132. (new) The method of Claim 129, wherein the step of using annotation further comprises the step of using symbols to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 133. (new) The method of Claim 124, wherein the step of using audio media choices further comprises the step of using text to speech options to direct attention to changes in terms.

Claim 134. (new) The method of Claim 123, wherein the step of using formatting choices
further comprises the step of configuring the database to show changes for only a specified subset of terms.

Claim 135. (new) The method of Claim 123, wherein the step of using formatting choices further comprises the step of configuring the database to direct attention to changes automatically as negotiations progress.

Claim 136. (new) The method of Claim 123, wherein the step of using formatting choices further comprises the step of configuring the database to direct attention to changes only as requested manually by a user.

Claim 137. (new) The method of Claim 123, wherein the step of using formatting choices further comprises the step of configuring the database to direct attention to

changes by linking a uniform resource locator to at least one subset of the changed terms.

Claim 138. (new) The method of Claim 123, wherein the step of using formatting choices further comprises the step of configuring the database to direct attention to changes by transmitting a notification to the user, the notification referring to the changed terms.

Claim 139. (new) The method of Claim 123, wherein the step of using formatting choices further comprises the step of configuring the database to direct attention to changes by sending an electronic mail message including the changed terms.

Claim 140. (new) The method of Claim 123, wherein the step of using formatting choices further comprises the step of configuring the database to direct attention to changes by sending an electronic mail message referring to the changed terms.

Claim 141. (new) An apparatus for providing an automated system of record for workgroup negotiations, comprising:

a sponsor function for supplying an initial set of terms for use by users in a workgroup, the terms specifying a subject for negotiation; and

a multivariate negotiations system including storage space, and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the multivariate negotiations system being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms by storing changed terms in the storage space until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity.

Claim 142. (new) The apparatus of Claim 141, wherein the subject for negotiation further comprises a set of standards.

Claim 143. (new) The apparatus of Claim 141, wherein the subject for negotiation further comprises a schedule.

Claim 144. (new) The apparatus of Claim 141, wherein the subject for negotiation further comprises a treaty.

Claim 145. (new) The apparatus of Claim 141, wherein the subject for negotiation further comprises a plan.

Claim 146. (new) The apparatus of Claim 141, wherein the subject for negotiation further comprises an allocation of resources.

Claim 147. (new) The apparatus of Claim 141, wherein the subject for negotiation further comprises an allocation of efforts.

Claim 148. (new) The apparatus of Claim 141, wherein the subject for negotiation further comprises a contract.

Claim 149. (new) The apparatus of Claim 141, wherein the subject for negotiation further comprises requirements.

Claim 150. (new) The apparatus of Claim 141, wherein the subject for negotiation further comprises a design.

Claim 151. (new) The apparatus of claim 141, wherein user supplied context further comprises duration parameters specifying how long the terms pertaining to a negotiation are to be kept.

Claim 152. (new) A method for providing an automated system of record for workgroup negotiations, comprising the steps of :

supplying an initial set of terms for use by users in a workgroup, the terms specifying a subject for negotiation; and

operating a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the de0stination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as

negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated

negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the

storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which

proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the

indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms

by storing the changed terms in the storage space until a set of terms is acted upon in a

final manner by the deciding entity.

Claim 153. (new) The method of Claim 152, wherein the step of specifying the subject

for negotiation further comprises the step of specifying a set of standards.

Claim 154. (new) The method of Claim 152, wherein the step of specifying a subject for

negotiation further comprises the step of specifying a schedule.

Claim 155. (new) The method of Claim 152, wherein the step of specifying a subject for

negotiation further comprises the step of specifying a treaty.

Claim 156. (new) The method of Claim 152, wherein the step of specifying a subject for

negotiation further comprises the step of specifying a plan.

Claim 157. (new) The method of Claim 152, wherein the step of specifying a subject for

negotiation further comprises the step of specifying an allocation of resources.

Claim 158. (new) The method of Claim 152, wherein the step of specifying a subject for

negotiation further comprises the step of specifying an allocation of efforts.

Claim 159. (new) The method of Claim 152, wherein the step of specifying a subject for negotiation further comprises the step of specifying a contract.

Claim 160. (new) The method of Claim 152, wherein the step of specifying a subject for negotiation further comprises the step of specifying requirements.

Claim 161. (new) The method of Claim 152, wherein the step of specifying a subject for negotiation further comprises the step of specifying a design.

Claim 162. (new) The method of claim 152, wherein the step of using user supplied context further comprises the step of specifying how long the terms pertaining to a negotiation are to be kept.

Claim 163. (new) An apparatus for communicating information about a negotiation, comprising:

a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an

initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations

system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along

a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system,

during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at

the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one

of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further

recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each

terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being

sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the

automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms until a set of terms is

acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

   a sponsor authority for assigning a unique identifier to such a negotiation at the

initiation of negotiations.

Claim 164. (new) The apparatus of Claim 163, wherein the sponsor authority further

comprises a router for routing negotiation information related to a unique identifier.

Claim 165. (new) The apparatus of Claim 164, wherein the sponsor authority further

comprises a central switch for forwarding negotiation information from the router to a

designated recipient.

Claim 166. (new) The apparatus of Claim 165, wherein the sponsor authority further

comprises a dynamic manager for querying a router for information about an identified

negotiation.

Claim 167. (new) A method for communicating information about a negotiation, comprising the steps of:

operating a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

assigning a unique identifier to such a negotiation at the initiation of negotiations, through the use of a sponsor authority.

Claim 168. (new) The method of Claim 167, wherein the step of assigning a unique identifier further comprises the step of routing negotiation information related to a unique identifier through the use of a router.

Claim 169. (new) The method of Claim 168, wherein the step of assigning a unique identifier further comprises the step of forwarding information from the router to a designated recipient through the use of a central switch.

Claim 170. (new) The method of Claim 169, wherein the step of assigning a unique identifier further comprises the step of querying a router for information about an identified negotiation through the use of a dynamic manager.

Claim 171. (new) An apparatus for communicating dynamic information during a negotiation, comprising:

a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and

receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate

negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an

initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations

system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along

a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system,

during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at

the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one

of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further

recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each

terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being

sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the

automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms until a set of terms is

acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

a sponsor authority for assigning a unique identifier to a negotiation at the

initiation of such a negotiation;

a dynamic manager for transforming rules for governing negotiations into an

active template associated with the unique identifier, the active template containing

terms for use during such a negotiation.

Claim 172. (new) The apparatus of Claim 171, wherein the active template further

comprises predefined fields.

Claim 173. (new) The apparatus of Claim 172, wherein the predefined fields further

comprise fields formatted to provide variables to computer programs.

Claim 174. (new) The apparatus of Claim 172, wherein the predefined fields further comprise fields formatted to provide basic negotiation terms.

Claim 175. (new) The apparatus of Claim 172, wherein the predefined fields further comprise fields formatted to activate transactions during a negotiation.

Claim 176. (new) The apparatus of Claim 172, wherein the predefined fields further comprise fields formatted to receive variables communicated from a computer program.

Claim 177. (new) The apparatus of Claim 172, wherein the predefined fields further comprise fields formatted to contain variables and the rules to be applied to those variables.

Claim 178. (new) The apparatus of Claim 172, wherein the predefined fields further comprise fields formatted to specify actions to be taken at specified phases in a negotiation.

Claim 179. (new) The apparatus of Claim 172, wherein the predefined fields further comprise fields formatted to apply variables resulting from a designated negotiation iteration to a computer program.

Claim 180. (new) The apparatus of Claim 172, wherein the predefined fields further comprise fields formatted to supply security access control information associated with each variable.

Claim 181. (new) A method for communicating dynamic information during a negotiation, comprising the steps of:

operating a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

assigning a unique identifier to a negotiation at the initiation of such a negotiation through the use of a sponsor authority;

transforming rules for governing negotiations into an active template associated with the unique identifier through the use of a dynamic manager, the dynamic manager also inserting terms for use during such a negotiation into the active template.

Claim 182. The method of Claim 181, wherein the step of inserting terms for use further comprises the step of using predefined fields.

Claim 183. (new) The method of Claim 182, wherein the step of using predefined fields further comprises the step of formatting the fields to provide variables to computer programs.

Claim 184. (new) The method of Claim 182, wherein the step of using predefined fields further comprises the step of formatting the fields to provide basic negotiation terms.

Claim 185. (new) The method of Claim 182, wherein the step of using predefined fields further comprises the step of formatting the fields to activate transactions during a negotiation.

Claim 186. (new) The method of Claim 182, wherein the step of using predefined fields further comprises the step of formatting the fields to receive variables communicated from a computer program.

Claim 187. (new) The method of Claim 182, wherein the step of using predefined fields further comprises the step of formatting the fields to contain variables and the rules to be applied to those variables.

Claim 188. (new) The method of Claim 182, wherein the step of using predefined fields further comprises the step of formatting the fields to specify actions to be taken at specified phases in a negotiation.

Claim 189. (new) The method of Claim 182, wherein the step of using predefined fields further comprises the step of formatting the fields to apply variables resulting from a designated negotiation iteration to a computer program.

Claim 190. (new) The method of Claim 182, wherein the step of using predefined fields further comprises the step of formatting the fields to supply security access control information associated with each variable.

Claim 191. (new) The method of Claim 182, wherein the step of using predefined fields further comprises the step of formatting the fields to contain variables and the rules to be applied to those variables.

Claim 192. (new) An apparatus for processing a plurality of negotiations comprising:

at least one a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the

multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for

sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the

multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being

responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the

multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending

and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate

negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine

recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as

negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated

negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the

storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which

proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the

indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms

until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

> a sponsor authority for assigning a unique identifier to a negotiation at the

initiation of such a negotiation.

Claim 193. (new) The apparatus of Claim 192, wherein the multivariate negotiations

engine further comprises:

> a multivariate negotiations engine configured to process commercial

negotiations; and

> application programming interface functions configured to transmit data to and

from the commercial negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 194. (new) The apparatus of Claim 192, wherein the multivariate negotiations engine further comprises:

a multivariate negotiations engine configured to process internal workgroup negotiations; and

application programming interface functions configured to transmit data to and from the workgroup negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 195. (new) The apparatus of Claim 192, wherein the multivariate negotiations engine further comprises:

a multivariate negotiations engine configured to process negotiations with customers; and

application programming interface functions configured to transmit data to and from the customer negotiations and to and from user- specified systems.

Claim 196. (new) The apparatus of Claim 192, wherein the multivariate negotiations engine further comprises:

a multivariate negotiations engine configured to process sales negotiations; and

application programming interface functions configured to transmit data to and from the sales negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 197. (new) The apparatus of Claim 192, wherein the multivariate negotiations engine further comprises:

a multivariate negotiations engine configured to process technical negotiations; and

application programming interface functions configured to transmit data to and from the technical negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 198. (new) The apparatus of Claim 192, wherein the multivariate negotiations engine further comprises:

a multivariate negotiations engine configured to process negotiations with suppliers; and

application programming interface functions configured to transmit data to and from the supplier negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 199. The apparatus of Claim 192, wherein the multivariate negotiations engine further comprises:

a multivariate negotiations engine configured to process planning negotiations; and

application programming interface functions configured to transmit data to and from the planning negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 200. The apparatus of Claim 192, wherein the multivariate negotiations engine further comprises:

a multivariate negotiations engine configured to process internal budget and financial negotiations; and

application programming interface functions configured to transmit data to and from the internal budget and financial negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 201. (new) A method for processing a plurality of negotiations comprising the steps of:

operating at least one a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

using a sponsor authority for assigning a unique identifier to a negotiation at the initiation of such a negotiation.

Claim 202. (new) The method of Claim 201, wherein the step of operating a multivariate negotiations engine further comprises the steps of:

configuring a multivariate negotiations engine to process commercial negotiations; and

configuring application programming interface functions to transmit data to and from the commercial negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 203. (new) The method of Claim 201, wherein the step of operating a multivariate negotiations engine further comprises the steps of:

configuring a multivariate negotiations engine to process internal workgroup negotiations; and

configuring application programming interface functions to transmit data to and from the workgroup negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 204. (new) The method of Claim 201, wherein the step of operating a multivariate negotiations engine further comprises the steps of:

configuring a multivariate negotiations engine to process negotiations with customers; and

configuring application programming interface functions to transmit data to and from the customer negotiations and to and from user- specified systems.

Claim 205. (new) The method of Claim 201, wherein the step of operating a multivariate negotiations engine further comprises the steps of:

configuring a multivariate negotiations engine to process sales negotiations; and

configuring application programming interface functions to transmit data to and from the sales negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 206. (new) The method of Claim 201, wherein the step of operating a multivariate negotiations engine further comprises the steps of:

configuring a multivariate negotiations engine to process technical negotiations; and

configuring application programming interface functions to transmit data to and from the technical negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 207. (new) The method of Claim 201, wherein the step of operating a multivariate negotiations engine further comprises the steps of:

configuring a multivariate negotiations engine to process negotiations with suppliers; and

configuring application programming interface functions to transmit data to and from the supplier negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 208. (new) The method of Claim 201, wherein the step of operating a multivariate negotiations engine further comprises the steps of:

configuring a multivariate negotiations engine to process planning negotiations; and

configuring application programming interface functions to transmit data to and

from the planning negotiations and to and from user-specified systems.

Claim 209. (new)The method of Claim 201, wherein the step of operating a multivariate

negotiations engine further comprises the steps of :

configuring a multivariate negotiations engine to process internal budget and

financial negotiations; and

configuring application programming interface functions to transmit data to and

from the internal budget and financial negotiations and to and from user-specified

systems.

Claim 210. (new) An apparatus for processing negotiations in multiple communities

comprising:

at least one multivariate negotiations system including storage space and

negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations

engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the

purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them

into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being

responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the

multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for

sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the

multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being

responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the

multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending

and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity;

sponsored community software for specifying rules and procedures for at least one community; and

a sponsor authority for assigning a unique identifier to a negotiation at the initiation of such a negotiation.

Claim 211. (new) The apparatus of Claim 210, wherein the sponsored community further comprises a commercial community.

Claim 212. (new) The apparatus of Claim 210, wherein the sponsored community further comprises a non-commercial community.

Claim 213. (new) A method for processing negotiations in multiple communities comprising the steps of :

operating at least one multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising

understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity;

specifying rules and procedures for at least one community using sponsored community software; and

assigning a unique identifier to a negotiation at the initiation of such a negotiation using a sponsor authority.

Claim 214. (new) The method of Claim 213, wherein the step of specifying rules and procedures further comprises the step of specifying rules and procedures for a commercial community.

Claim 215. (new) The method of Claim 213, wherein the step of specifying rules and procedures further comprises the step of specifying rules and procedures for a non-commercial community.

Claim 216. (new) An apparatus for evaluating information about a process related to a negotiation, comprising:

a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further

recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

a process mining function for evaluating a process related to such a negotiation.

Claim 217. (new)The apparatus of Claim 216, wherein the process mining function further comprises an active template for specifying variables to be evaluated.

Claim 218. (new) The apparatus of Claim 217, wherein the active template further comprises an alert mechanism for initiating evaluation.

Claim 219. (new) The apparatus of Claim 217, wherein the active template further comprises a sponsor authority for assigning a unique identifier to a negotiation.

Claim 220. (new)The apparatus of Claim 217, wherein the active template further comprises predefined fields for activating a computer program to analyze the specified variables.

Claim 221. (new) The apparatus of Claim 217, wherein the specified variables include data collected during the negotiation.

Claim 222. (new) The apparatus of Claim 217, wherein the specified variables include trackable events occurring as a result of the negotiation.

Claim 223. (new) The apparatus of Claim 217, wherein the specified variables include trackable activities occurring as a result of the negotiation.

Claim 224. (new) The apparatus of Claim 229, wherein the computer program further comprises a dynamic manager for converting the results of an analysis into an active template for governing subsequent negotiations.

Claim 225. (new) The apparatus of Claim 224, wherein the dynamic manager further comprises a procedure for recommending modifications to an existing agreement as a result of an analysis performed.

Claim 226. (new) The apparatus of Claim 224, wherein the dynamic manager stores the results of an analysis associated with a unique identifier in the storage area.

Claim 227. (new) The apparatus of Claim 217, wherein the specified variables are associated with a single user.

Claim 228. (new) The apparatus of Claim 217, wherein the specified variables are associated with at least two users.

Claim 229. (new) The apparatus of Claim 228, wherein the users agree to provide access to information for purposes of an evaluation.

Claim 230. (new) The apparatus of Claim 224, wherein the dynamic manager further comprises a security function for validating that the results stored have appropriate access controls and privilege safeguards.

Claim 231. (new) A method for evaluating information about a process related to a negotiation, comprising the steps of:

operating a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which

proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

evaluating a process related to such a negotiation by using a process mining function.

Claim 232. (new) The method of Claim 231, wherein the step of evaluating a process further comprises the step of specifying variables to be evaluated using an active template.

Claim 233. (new) The method of Claim 232, wherein the step of using an active template further comprises the step of initiating an evaluation using an alert mechanism.

Claim 234. (new) The method of Claim 232, wherein the step of using an active template further comprises the step of assigning a unique identifier to a negotiation.

Claim 235. (new) The method of Claim 232 , wherein the step of using an active template further comprises the step of activating a computer program to analyze the specified variables.

Claim 236. (new) The method of Claim 232, wherein the step of using an active template further comprises the step of including data collected during the negotiation.

Claim 237. (new) The method of Claim 232, wherein the step of using an active template further comprises the step of including trackable events occurring as a result of the negotiation.

Claim 238. (new) The method of Claim 232, wherein the step of using an active template further comprises the step of including trackable activities occurring as a result of the negotiation.

Claim 239. (new) The method of Claim 235, wherein the step of activating a computer program further comprises the step of converting the results of an analysis into an active template for governing subsequent negotiations.

Claim 240. (new) The method of Claim 239, wherein the step of converting the results of an analysis further comprises the step of recommending modifications to an existing agreement as a result of an analysis performed.

Claim 241. (new) The method of Claim 240, wherein the step of converting the results of an analysis further comprises the step of storing the results of an analysis associated with a unique identifier in the storage area.

Claim 242. (new) The method of Claim 232, wherein the step of specifying variables further comprises the step of associating them with a single user.

Claim 243. (new) The method of Claim 232, wherein the step of specifying variables further comprises the step of associating them with at least two users.

Claim 244. (new) The method of Claim 243, wherein the step of associating them with at least two users further comprises obtaining the users' agreement to accessing information for purposes of an evaluation.

Claim 245. (new) The method of Claim 239, wherein the step of converting the results of an analysis further comprises the step of validating that the results stored have appropriate access controls and privilege safeguards.

Claim 246. (new) An apparatus for processing a negotiation and displaying changes in terms, comprising:

a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system,

during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating any changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

a sponsor procedure for configuring how changes in terms are to be indicated.

Claim 247. The apparatus of Claim 246, wherein the sponsor procedure further comprises configuring which iterations of changes in terms to display during processing of the negotiation.

Claim 248. The apparatus of Claim 247, wherein the sponsor procedure further comprises configuring at installation time which iterations of changes in terms to display.

Claim 249. The apparatus of Claim 247, wherein the sponsor procedure further comprises configuring interactively which iterations of changes in terms to display.

Claim 250. The apparatus of Claim 247, wherein the sponsor procedure further comprises configuring the display of changes in terms to display changes in only the most recent iteration of terms.

Claim 251. The apparatus of Claim 247, wherein the sponsor procedure further comprises configuring the display of changes in terms to display changes between an initial set of terms and the most recent iteration of terms.

Claim 252. The apparatus of Claim 247, wherein the sponsor procedure further comprises configuring the display of changes in terms to display changes between a . user-specified sequence of iterations of terms.

Claim 253. The apparatus of Claim 247, wherein the sponsor procedure further comprises configuring the display of changes in terms to display the history of all changes in all iterations of terms.

Claim 254. (new) A method for processing a negotiation and displaying changes in terms, comprising the steps of:

       operating a multivariate negotiations system including storage space and negotiations software, such negotiations software including an automated negotiations engine for analyzing terms, the analysis of terms comprising understanding the purpose of the terms, formatting the terms according to the purpose, and placing them into user supplied context for use by a user, the automated negotiations engine being responsive to a destination terminal for a first user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the destination terminal including software for sending and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, the automated negotiations engine also being responsive to an initiating terminal for a second user communicating with the multivariate negotiations system, the initiating terminal including software for sending

and receiving terms along a communications path which flows through the multivariate negotiations system, during iterative processing the automated negotiations engine recognizing the users at the destination terminal and the initiating terminal as negotiators and recognizing one of the users as a deciding entity, such automated negotiations engine further recognizing any changes in the terms and storing in the storage space the terms each terminal proposes, and recognizing the terminal to which proposed terms are being sent as the indicated terminal, and sending terms to the indicated terminal, the automated negotiations engine indicating ~~any~~ changes in the terms until a set of terms is acted upon in a final manner by the deciding entity; and

configuring how changes in terms are to be indicated.

Claim 255. The method of Claim 254, wherein the step of configuring further comprises the step of configuring which iterations of changes in terms to display during processing of the negotiation.

Claim 256. The method of Claim 255, wherein the step of configuring further comprises the step of configuring at installation time which iterations of changes in terms to display.

Claim 257. The method of Claim 255, wherein the step of configuring further comprises the step of configuring interactively which iterations of changes in terms to display.

Claim 258. The method of Claim 255, wherein the step of configuring further comprises the step of configuring to display changes in only the most recent iteration of terms.

Claim 259. The method of Claim 255, the step of configuring further comprises the step of configuring to display changes between an initial set of terms and the most recent iteration of terms.

Claim 260. The method of Claim 255, wherein the step of configuring further comprises the step of configuring to display changes between a user-specified sequence of iterations of terms.

Claim 261. The method of Claim 255, the step of configuring further comprises the step of configuring to display the history of all changes in all iterations of terms.